Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /078 W
----------073999 222151Z /75
R 212300Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1438
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0289

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: RYAN DROPS DESROCHERS

1. DURING CONVERSATIONS WITH NEWSMEN OVER THE WEEKEND QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY LEADER CLAUDE RYAN REVEALED THAT HE HAD QUIETLY CUT THE LAST REMAINING TIE BETWEEN THE PARTY AND FORMER LIBERAL STRONGMAN PAUL DESROCHERS. RYAN SAID THAT SHORTLY AFTER THE LIBERAL CONVENTION LAST APRIL HE HAD REPLACED THE THREE FORMER PARTY FINANCIAL TRUSTEES, ONE OF WHOM WAS DESROCHERS. THE NEW TRUSTEES ARE RYAN CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISER GILLES HEBERT, PARTY TREASURER JEAN-PIERRE ROY, AND RYAN HIMSELF.

2. DESROCHERS, A BRILLIANT PARTY ORGANIZER AND BEHIND-THE-SCENES STRONGMAN DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE BOURASSA REGIME, WAS AT ONE POINT CONSIDERED THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE GOVERN-MENT (AFTER BOURASSA) ALTHOUGH HE HELD NO FORMAL POSITION OTHER THAN THAT OF SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER. DESROCHERS EVENTUALLY BROKE WITH BOURASSA OVER BILL 22, A CONTROVERSIAL PIECE OF LANGUAGE LEGISLATION, BUT RETAINED CONSIDERABLE, IF WANING, INFLUENCE IN THE PARTY FOR SEVERAL YEARS AFTERWARD, LARGELY BECAUSE OF EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF FRIENDS WITH THE PARTY CADRE AND HIS ALMOST MYTHICAL REPUTATION. THE ELECTION OF RYAN, HOWEVER,
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BROUGHT DOWN THE CURTAIN ON THE DESROCHERS ERA. RYAN HAD FOR YEARS MADE NO SECRET OF HIS DISTASTE FOR DESROCHERS AND FOR THE SMOKE-FILLED-ROOM BRAND OF POLITICS WHICH DESROCHERS REPRESENTED. HE MADE IT CLEAR DURING THE LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN THAT THE REJUVENATED PARTY HAD NO ROOM FOR THE OLD GUARD OF DESROCHERS' ILK. RYAN'S WEEKEND ANNOUNCEMENT SIMPLY FORMALIZED WHAT EVERYONE KNEW WAS INEVITABLE.

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